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wherein at least a portion of the external peripheral rim is beveled back at least 25% with respect to a wall thickness of the tube to form an internal beveled surface such that the internal beveled surface surrounds 20-70% of the opening.

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7. (Once Amended) The hypodermic needle of claim 6 wherein a circle coincident with the curvature of the internal beveled surface has a radius of curvature that is at least 25% with respect to the wall thickness.

10. (Once Amended) A hypodermic needle, comprising:
a hollow tube having an angled end with respects to a longitudinal axis of the tube, the end having a means for reducing fluid stress at an entrance of the needle, the means for reducing fluid stress comprising an opening surrounded by an external peripheral rim wherein at least a portion of the external peripheral rim is beveled back at least 25% with respect to a wall thickness of the tube to form an internal beveled surface such that the internal beveled surface surrounds 20-70% of the opening.

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11. (Once Amended) In a hypodermic needle having an internal substantially cylindrical surface; an external substantially cylindrical surface; an end angled with respect to a longitudinal axis of the needle, the end having an opening and defining a piercing tip; an outer peripheral rim, the rim partially surrounding a first region of the opening proximal to the piercing tip and connecting the external and internal cylindrical surfaces of the needle; the improvement, comprising:

an internal beveled surface on the internal surface of the needle surrounding 20-70% of a second region of said opening opposite the first region, wherein the degree of beveling back of the rim is at least 25% with respect to a wall thickness of the hypodermic needle.

12. (Once Amended) The hypodermic needle of claim 11, wherein at least a portion of the external peripheral rim is beveled back at least 30%.

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13. (Once Amended) The hypodermic needle of claim 11, wherein at least a portion of the external peripheral rim is beveled back at least 50%.

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15. (Once Amended) In a method of preparing a sample, comprising:
withdrawing blood with a hypodermic needle, the hypodermic needle having an internal substantially cylindrical surface; an external substantially cylindrical surface; an end angled with respect to a longitudinal axis of the needle, the end having an opening and defining a piercing tip; an outer peripheral rim, the rim partially surrounding a first region of the opening proximal to the piercing tip and connecting the external and internal cylindrical surfaces of the needle; the improvement comprising withdrawing blood with the hypodermic needle having an internal beveled surface on the internal surface of the hypodermic needle surrounding 20-70% of a second region of said opening opposite the first region, wherein the degree of beveling back of the rim is at least 25% with respect to a wall thickness of the hypodermic.

Please cancel claims 8 and 9, without prejudice for further prosecution in a continuation application.

IN THE SPECIFICATION

Please replace the second, third, fourth and fifth paragraphs on page 6 with the following substituted paragraphs.

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-- As shown in Figure 5, a generally planar external peripheral rim 44 having an outer edge 46 and an inner edge 48, front half and rear half regions 50 and 52, respectively, surrounds the opening 40 and connects the internal and external cylindrical surfaces 32 and 34 of the needle 30.